

## **Imam Abu Hanifa (ra): An Authority And Critic Of Hadith**

[http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/549\\_08-11-2010/imam-abu-hanifa-%28ra%29%3A-an-authority-and-critic-of-hadith.html](http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/549_08-11-2010/imam-abu-hanifa-%28ra%29%3A-an-authority-and-critic-of-hadith.html)

112 ahadeeth of Imam Bukhari (rahmatullahi alaih) are criticised and 130 of Imam Muslim's (rahmatullahi alaih) are criticised. Imaam Bukhari (ra) has related ahadeeth from 435 narrators that Imaam Muslim (ra) has not related from. Of these, 80 are doubtful. Imam Muslim (ra) has taken ahadeeth from 620 narrators that Imam Bukhari (ra) has not, and of these, 160 are doubtful. In contrast to this, Imam Abu Hanifa (rahmatullahi alaih) has ruled on 1,290,000 mas'aail, of which only 5 to 7 rulings are criticised. Is this not proof of Imam Saheb's greatness and status? (Taqlaed - page 50)

'Allama Dhahabi writes in the introduction to his Tadhkirat al-Huffaz:

**"This is a review of those personalities whom I have judged to be reliable and the possessors of prophetic knowledge (al-'ilm al-nabawi), and those who could be consulted for their expertise in determining the authenticity or weakness (of narrations) and the reliability or weakness (of narrators)." (1:2).**

'Allama Dhahabi includes Imam Abu Hanifa (ra) among them, which makes it clear that he was a bearer of prophetic knowledge, possessed many narrations, and was considered an authority in the field of hadith.

Suwayd ibn Sa'd reports that Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna said:

**"The first person to encourage me to relate hadiths was Abu Hanifa (ra). When I arrived in Kufa, he declared that this person possesses the largest number of narrations from 'Amr ibn Dinar. (On hearing this) people began to gather around me, and I began to relate to them." (I'la' al-sunan 19:315)**

In another report Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna said:

**"The first person to make me a hadith scholar was Abu Hanifa (ra)." (al-Jawahir al-mudi'a 1:30)**

Imam Abu Yusuf said,

**"I have never found anyone with more insight into the interpretation of hadiths than Abu Hanifa." (Jami' al-'ilm 1:29)**

This statement of Abu Yusuf can be further understood by the following report of Mulla 'Ali al-Qari:

**"Imam Abu Hanifa was (once) with A'mash, who asked him about something. Imam Abu Hanifa replied, 'My opinion in this matter is such-and-such.' Upon hearing this, A'mash asked as to how he had formed this (opinion). Imam Abu Hanifa said, 'You reported to us from Abu Salih who reported from Abu Hurayra; you reported to us from Abu Wa'il who reported from 'Abdullah; and you reported to us from Abu Ilyas who reported from Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said such-and-such. You also reported the same to us from Abu Miljaz, who reported it from Hudhayfa, who from Abu'l-Zubayr, who from Jabir and Yazid al-Raqqashi, and they from Anas (ra).' A'mash explained, 'Enough! Enough! What took me a hundred days to narrate you repeated to me in just an instance. I was not aware that your practise was based on these hadiths.' Then he exclaimed, 'O group of jurists, you are the physicians, and we are merely the**

**pharmacists; and you (addressing Abu Hanifa) are both."** (Manaqib al-Imam 484)

Imam Abu Yusuf also said:

**"I have never opposed Abu Hanifa on any issue, then went back and pondered over it, except to find his opinion more superior (to mine) and more benefiting in terms of the hereafter. At times, I would hold on to a particular hadith, but he would prove to possess more insight concerning its authenticity. There were times when he would strongly defend a certain opinion, and I would visit the scholars of Kufa to see if I could find some (other) hadiths to support his opinion. Sometimes I would return with two or three hadiths, and he would remark concerning one of them, 'This is not strong,' or concerning another, 'This one is not linked (ma'ruf).' I would exclaim in amazement, 'How do you say this when support your opinion?' He would reply, 'I possess insight into the knowledge of Kufa.'" (al-Khayrat al-hisan 69)**

Yahya al-Himmani states:

**"I hear Abu Hanifa saying, 'I have never seen a greater liar than Jabir al-Ju'fi or anybody more superior to 'Ata!'" (Tahd'hib al-Tahdhib 2:48, Kitab al-'Ilal li'l-Tirmidhi 13:309)**

Abu Sa'id al-San'ani asked Abu Hanifa his opinion on narrating from Sufyan al-Thawri. He said:

**"Record his hadiths, for he is reliable (thiqa), except his narrations from Abu Ishaq from Harith; and (avoid) the narrations of Jabir al-Ju'fi." (al-Jawahir al-mudi'a 1:30)**

It is also reported that Imam Abu Hanifa (ra) said regarding Zayd ibn 'Ayash that 'he is unknown' (majhul). (Tahdhib al-Tahdhib 3:424)

Furthermore, the great Imam was not only aware of 'Amr ibn Dinar's name but was also aware of his agnomen (kunya). Ibn al-Mahdi said:

**"I have never seen anyone possessing greater knowledge of the Sunna than Abu Hanifa. We only became aware of 'Amr ibn Dinar's agnomen through him."**

These statements related from Imam Abu Hanifa (ra) concerning the status of various narrators make it clear that they could have only been stated by an expert in the scrutiny and criticism of narrators of hadiths.

The great historian and sociologist of the Muslim world Ibn Khaldun writes a conclusive report on the status of jurists in the field of hadith. He says:

**"Some people who are of a resentful disposition hatefully claim that there are jurists who know only a few hadiths, and they argue that this is the reason why so few hadiths have been (narrated) from them. This cannot be possible, especially in the case of the great Imams, because Islamic law (Shari'a) can only be derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. If one were to possess only superficial knowledge in this field, it would become necessary for him to occupy himself in learning it, for only then would he be able to acquire the religion (its rulings) from the correct source, i.e. from the one (Muhammad - sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) who had been appointed to propagate it." (Muqaddima Ibn Khaldun 371)**

Hence, this proves that it is impossible that someone whom a vast majority of this Umma has accepted as a competent jurist possess only superficial knowledge of hadiths. The reliance and trust

placed on Imam Abu Hanifa's school by the People of the Sunnah throughout the majority of the Muslim history, and the high regard with which his opinions are held concerning the acceptance or rejection of hadiths and their narrators, all establish his greatness in the field of hadith.